

TERRIFIC EXPLOSION.

Destruction of the Dupont Powder Works at Wilmington, Del.

A Fearful Loss of Life Reported—Two Villages Blown to Atoms—Many Families Made Homeless—Harrowing Scenes.

WILMINGTON, Del., Oct. 8.—Several startling explosions in quick succession—some counted five, others seven—at 2:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon announced to Wilmington a disaster at the Dupont powder works on the Brandywine. A rush was made for telephones, but nothing could be learned beyond vague reports of damage.

As soon as horsemen from here could reach the works it was found that the whole section of the works known as "upper yard" was a complete wreck, and at least twelve persons were killed and twenty wounded, while Rockland was a complete wreck, none of its houses being left standing.

Rockland is a village on the Brandywine fully a mile above the scene of the explosion. It has a large paper mill owned by the Jessup & Moore Company, about fifty dwellings, in which chiefly reside the mill employees. Its population is about 300.

There were several reports resembling the booming of cannon and about a second apart. The first thought was that there had been an explosion at the powder works, but the reports seemed so near and not being characterized by the usual rumbling and there being no smoke visible in the direction of the mills, it was imagined that the explosion had occurred in the city. The hazy atmosphere hid the smoke and caused the reports to sound differently from those of preceding explosions.

Physicians summoned by telephone and hurrying toward the powder manufactory was the first indication the public had of the exact location of the catastrophe. Immediately thereafter thousands of people went to the scene of the disaster.

The office of the Dupont Company is a complete wreck and six mills are in ruins. Several members of the Dupont firm were injured by falling walls and broken glass, but none of them seriously. Among the slightly injured are: Eugene Dupont, the head of the firm; Francis G. Dupont and Charles I. Dupont. They and several clerks in the office were cut by fragments of broken glass but none of them seriously.

The dead were all employees of the company and were in and about the mills that exploded.

Several workmen are missing and are believed to have been blown into fragments. The wounded received their injuries among the walls of their falling houses and by broken glass and flying debris.

The first explosion occurred in one of the packing mills, where a workman named Grau was soldering a can of hexagonal powder to be shipped for the use of the United States Government. In some way a spark communicated to the can and blew it up. Instantly the packing mill exploded, and the other mills in the upper yards, seven or eight in number, followed at intervals of less than one second. All these, except one, were "rolling mills," in which the ingredients of gunpowder are pulverized by the action of vertical rollers of stone turning slowly around a central post. The whole machinery is driven by water power.

Immediately after the explosion a large building known as the "refinery," located near the center of the village, took fire. It was a matter of life and death to the whole population that this fire should be extinguished before it communicated with the powder the building contained. The Dupont fire brigade valiantly fought the flames, which had caught the roof and succeeded in extinguishing them. Had the roof fallen in it is doubtful if any man, woman or child in the vicinity would have escaped death or serious injury. About fifty families are rendered homeless by the disaster.

At Mount Salem Methodist Church more than one-half of the window sashes of the large building were blown out and of those that remained the glass was broken.

At the scene of the disaster women and children, wives and sons and daughters of men employed in the powder manufactory, were madly rushing here and there seeking information about the safety of their loved ones. The yard in which the mills stood was littered with debris of fallen buildings and at some places where buildings had been the only trace left was empty cellars and a few foundation stones.

The little village of Dupont's Banks, immediately outside the powder yard, presented a most pitiable appearance. A hundred dwellings were either demolished or badly damaged. Buildings were unroofed and fronts of houses were blown out and wrecked. Inside the dwellings the devastation was complete. The rooms on the ground floor were strewn with broken crockery, crushed stoves and remnants of tables, etc.

It is estimated that the loss can not be less than \$500,000.

Fifty families are rendered homeless by the disaster and many were so dazed by the terrible events of those few seconds as to seem hardly conscious of where they were or what they were doing. The injured are being gathered into the hospital building, pertaining to the works and are receiving such aid as they need.

PLUMBS ON THE TARIFF.

The Senator Writes a Letter Which Will Be Read With Interest, Although of Not Very Recent Date.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7.—The following letter, written by Senator Plumb, one of the Republican Senators from Kansas, to a Germantown (Pa.) manufacturer, has been published in the Philadelphia Press:

UNITED STATES SENATE, WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 14, 1900.—Dear Sir: I have yours of the 3d. Do not give yourself any concern about my relations to the Republican party. Did you never before hear of a Republican who was such notwithstanding he did not believe in the highest possible protective tariff, and in giving to the manufacturers every thing they asked for? If all those who believe with me were driven out of the Republican party, I beg you to take notice that it would not be a very powerful organization. It certainly would not carry many of the Western States. How do you account for the fact that a majority of the farmers of New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut and a large proportion of those of New York and Ohio are Democrats, notwithstanding they live in the shadow of the very chimneys for which extreme protection is invoked? Do you think the tariff is of more benefit to the people of Kansas than it is to those of Pennsylvania and Connecticut?

How does it happen that a majority of the farmers of Indiana—a great manufacturing State—are Democrats? I am myself in favor of protection, but I believe we have gone far enough; and, whether we have gone far enough or not, I insist that if a manufacturer wants more protection he must demonstrate the necessity for it. This has not even been attempted, but with an insolence which in itself calls for rebuke, the manufacturers and those who represent them have simply said we want it, and that is enough. There has not been an argument which was worth the name offered to show that higher protection was needed. It is rather a poor commentary on the American manufacturer that, after having been given the local field for more than thirty years, he is still too weak to stand alone, but too weak to even exist unless he gets still higher protection than he has ever had. I am open to conviction upon this as upon every thing else, but I can not be driven, and it happens at the present time, if the indications which multiply on every hand can be relied on, that a very large majority of the people of Kansas are with me. I get letters and telegrams from there by the hundreds endorsing my course, and all from Republicans, and I also get scores of similar letters from Republican in the Eastern and Middle States.

Isn't it quite possible, now, that a man may be a good Republican and a good protectionist without taking the same view of a particular duty which the manufacturers do? Isn't it possible that a manufacturer, who is to get the cash in his pocket direct as the result of the imposition of a duty, is liable to be warped somewhat by his self-interest, and isn't it fair for the consumers of the United States to say in a given case that even if the duty may be necessary the burden is greater on them than they think they ought to bear?

My judgment is the manufacturers are making an issue which is going to be hurtful to them, as I also sincerely believe that the imposition of the duties which they are asking for will be hurtful to the country. If this sincere belief makes me other than a Republican, then I have never known what the Republican party was. You quote Messrs. McKinley and Reed to me. They are two very eminent men, but human beings, and liable to be mistaken. May I not, in opposition to that, quote Mr. Blaine to you? May I also not quote to you the thousands of Republicans in the State of Iowa who have left the party on account of its position on the tariff, whereby that State, instead of giving 60,000 majority, as it did in 1880, is now in the doubtful column.

Respectfully yours, P. B. PLUMB.

THE DEADLY WIRE.

An Unfortunate Roofer Instantly Killed By Contact With an Electric Wire.

NEW ORLEANS, Oct. 7.—Another electric horror occurred yesterday on the roof of the building at the corner of Camp and Gravier streets. Several tin-smiths were engaged in repairing the roof of the gallery, which is made of tin. The roof was wet with dew and is overhung by numerous electric wires, several of which were suspended directly over the gutters. One of the workmen, Joe Clements, twenty years of age, was engaged in cleaning out the dirt which had accumulated in the gutter and stooped under a large electric light cable. He was not aware that at this point the insulation cover was worn off for a distance of about four feet, and the unfortunate man, possibly cramped with his stooping position, rose up and touched the wire. To the horror of the fellow workmen who were on the roof with him he fell in a heap on the roof, gave one or two convulsive shudders and was dead. The ambulance was summoned. There was no distortion of the features and no burns about the body. Mr. Bemis, of the Edison works, said that not less than 2,000 volts had passed through the man's body. When the body was examined a broad dark-colored stripe was seen across the back, just below the shoulders, where the fatal wire had touched him.

INFORMAL WELCOME.

Senator Ingalls Cordially Received By His Townsfolk.

ATCHISON, Kan., Oct. 7.—The citizens of Atchison tendered Senator Ingalls an informal welcome last night. A large crowd of people, accompanied by a band, gathered around his handsome new residence and were soon delighted by the appearance of the Senator. He came out upon the veranda and delivered a speech lasting twenty minutes. He did not refer to the present convass, and his remarks were principally in relation to the great work accomplished by the session of Congress which has just ended. He explained his position on many of the important questions that had been passed upon, and was frequently interrupted by applause. He said there had never been a time that he did not feel that he had the confidence of the people of Atchison and of Kansas.

In closing his remarks he invited all to come upon the porch, and he shook hands with each person as the crowd passed the place where he stood.

KANSAS STATE NEWS.

The census gives Crawford County a population of 34,430, an increase of 12,592 in ten years. Cowley County has 80,160 inhabitants, an increase of 18,309.

The other day Cleve Pentindler, aged fourteen years, was horribly mangled by a coal train at Weir City. He tried to get on a moving car and fell under the wheels.

The arguments in the Rohrer habeas corpus case, to test the constitutionality of the Wilson Original Package law, was concluded in the United States court at Topeka the other day. Hon. L. B. Ke'logg, Attorney-General, and R. B. Welch, county attorney of Shawnee County, appeared in behalf of the State, and Hon. David Overmeyer and Judge Z. T. Hazen for the petitioner. The arguments of the counsel on both sides were very able. Two questions were prominent in the case: First, whether Congress exceeded its powers in passing the bill, and second, whether the Prohibitory law of the State was effective without re-enactment. The court took the case under advisement.

In accordance with the act of Congress creating a board of lady managers of the World's Columbian Exposition, C. K. Holliday, Jr., one of the commissioners, has nominated as lady commissioners from the State of Kansas, Mrs. Jennie Mitchell, of Kearney County, widow of General Robert Mitchell, and as alternate, Mrs. B. Blair Lynch, of Leavenworth, wife of Frank T. Lynch, editor of the Leavenworth Standard, and a daughter of General Charles W. Blair.

The capture of Benson, who is charged with the murder of Mrs. Mettman, of Leavenworth, has raised a debatable question as to judicial jurisdiction. If the murder was committed on the Fort Leavenworth military reservation he will be tried in the United States court, and a conviction will carry the penalty of death, but if the case is tried by the State court the penalty, while nominally death, is really only life imprisonment.

The old people of Kansas had their inning at the late Kansas City, Mo., fair. Prizes were offered by several business houses, and a silk umbrella, offered to the oldest person from Wyandotte County (Kan.), was awarded to Mrs. Harriet B. Havens, aged 84 years and 4 months. A gold-headed cane to the oldest man from Kansas was awarded to Mr. Thompson McDaniel, of Salina, aged 84 years and 9 months. A special premium of a gold-headed cane was awarded to Mr. Isalah Moore, of Kansas City, Kan., age, 74 years and 6 months. A hat to the handsomest man who could wear it was given to Mr. Toms, of Pratt. The hat was unusually large, being 7½ in size.

WILLIAM DWYER, a coach washer, was killed in attempting to board a Santa Fe train at Argentine the other evening. He had started to Kansas City to attend a lodge meeting of the Select Knights A. O. U. W., and had on his uniform at the time of the accident. He was twenty-five years old.

The Grand Army reunion opened at Topeka on the 7th with a much larger attendance than was expected.

JOHN W. FOSTER was arrested at Leavenworth the other day on the charge of counterfeiting nickels, dimes and dollars. The arrest was made on the complaint of a neighbor.

The Germans of Lawrence and vicinity celebrated the 30th anniversary of the landing of the German settlers in America in a becoming manner. The procession was one of the largest ever seen in that city.

ABOUT nine o'clock the other night as W. H. Mann, who keeps a grocery store in Rosedale, was preparing to close, a man entered with a drawn revolver and made the proprietor throw up his hands. He then robbed him of \$900. As the robber reached the street he fired his revolver in the air and cried, "Stop him," running toward the State line, which he crossed with the crowd which had gathered.

JOSEPH BUSCH, a German farmer who resided near Parkville, Mo., was taken suddenly ill in a street car in Kansas City, Kan., while on his way to participate in the anniversary celebration on the 6th, and died in a few minutes.

JOHN YONER, sixty-two years old, was recently robbed and murdered in a respectable house at Wichita. He was a stranger in the town and had been taken to the place by a man who offered to show him to a boarding house. Several inmates of the dive were arrested.

SALINA has a population of 6,031, an increase in ten years of 2,920.

H. H. WENTWORTH, of Atchison, is shortly to receive \$3,000 from the Government on a singular claim. Years ago his wagon train, running between Atchison and Denver, was raided by a band of Indians and every thing he had was taken. Wentworth was formerly well-to-do and owned a large farm where a portion of Topeka now stands. This was in the days when there were no railroads, and he traded his farm for a train of wagons. He is now employed as a railroad watchman at a street crossing, and is quite old.

Mrs. E. R. SAMPSON, of Spivy, died recently in the dental chair of Dr. Burkett, of Kingman, from the effect of chloroform administered by him. The autopsy conducted by the coroner showed a weak heart, and physicians called as experts declared that the use of chloroform under such circumstances was bad practice. The jury brought in a verdict charging Dr. Burkett with culpable negligence, and he was arrested.

PENSION REPORT.

Annual Report of the Commissioner of Pensions—Statistics of the Bureau—Expenditures.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7.—The annual report of Commissioner Green B. Raum, of the Pension Bureau, shows that there were at the end of the last fiscal year 557,944 pensioners borne upon the rolls, classified as follows: Army invalid pensioners, \$22,899; army widows, minor children and dependent relatives, 104,436; navy invalid pensioners, 5,274; navy widows, minor children and dependent relatives, 2,469; survivors of the war of 1812, 418; widows of soldiers of the war of 1812, 8,610; survivors of the Mexican war, 17,518; widows of soldiers of the Mexican war, 6,764. Total, 557,944.

There were 65,637 original claims allowed during the year, being 14,716 more than were allowed during the fiscal 1899 and 6,885 more than were allowed during the fiscal year 1898. The first payment in these 65,637 original claims amounted to \$32,478,041, being \$11,066,492 more than the first payments on the original claims allowed during the fiscal year 1899, and \$10,174,223 more than the first payments on the original claims allowed during the fiscal year 1898. The average value of the first payments on the original claims for 1899 was \$485.71. The average annual value of each pension at the close of the fiscal year was \$133.94. At the close of the fiscal year there were 20,628 pensioners unpaid who were entitled to receive \$4,857,347, which has since been paid from the appropriations for pensions for the fiscal year 1899.

Of the system of "completed files" organized by him the Commissioner says: "The completed files or trial docket is of great importance in securing the prompt adjudication of complete cases upon the motion of the claimant or his attorney. Prior to the establishment of this system the complaint was almost universal that thousands of claims were pending in the office, the consideration of which had been neglected for years, and that the claimants were powerless to secure their consideration. A soldier had a right to file an application for a pension and to present all the evidence necessary to prove his claim, but he had no power to bring that claim before an adjudicating division by an action on his part, the withdrawing of his claim from the files for that purpose being in the discretion of a file clerk. Under the system of the completed files the claimant has a right upon a proper certification that his claim is complete to have it immediately placed upon the completed files and taken up in its order for adjudication. Claims placed upon the completed files are taken up within a week for action, and if found complete are immediately allowed. If proofs are lacking a call is immediately made upon the claimant to supply the deficiency, and upon the receipt of the required evidence the claim is again taken up for consideration.

"The completed files system is an entirely just method of procedure. It gives the claimant the right, upon completing his case, to give notice and have it adjudicated. To June 30, 1899, 731 claims were placed upon the completed files upon requests made upon behalf of claimants. This system has had the effect of enabling many thousands of claimants whose claims have been pending from five to twenty years to bring their claims to the attention of the bureau for adjudication and allowance, and the delay has been reduced to a minimum. This system has proved to be more satisfactory than the old system of leaving the selection of claims for adjudication to the discretion of the file clerks. As a result of these changes in the business methods of the office, more work has been accomplished in a given time than was ever performed before. On October 21, 1899, when I took charge of the office, the work of adjudicating claims and issuing certificates had during the period from July 1, 1899, fallen far behind the same period for the previous fiscal year, while from October 21, 1899, to June 30, 1899, there was an increase in the adjudication of claims and the issuing of certificates greatly in excess of the same period of the preceding fiscal year. This is shown by the following statement of work done: Total number of certificates issued year ended June 30, 1899, 151,635; total number of certificates issued year ended June 30, 1899, 145,232; increase in 1899 over 1898, 6,403; total of original certificates issued year ended June 30, 1899, 65,637; total of original certificates issued year ended June 30, 1898, 51,493; increase in 1899 over 1898, 14,144. This great amount of work was accomplished by distributing the clerks who composed the board of review among other divisions and calling in forty special examiners from the field, thus adding eighty persons to the force engaged in the adjudication of claims, and particularly by concentrating the work of the office for five days in the week upon the adjudication of claims as provided for in order No. 149, creating the system of completed files.

"I respectfully invite your attention to the great difference in amount between the rate of \$30 per month granted by the act of March 3, 1883, to pensioners who are so disabled as to be incapacitated for performing any manual labor and the rate of \$72 per month granted by the act of March 4, 1899, to pensioners who require the regular aid and attendance of another person. There are many claimants who are entirely incapacitated for performing manual labor, and who periodically require the aid and attendance of other persons, but who are unable to establish the fact of the requirement of constant aid and attendance. It occurs to me that it would be a just provision to create a higher rate than \$30 per month for cases of this description, and I respectfully recommend that a rate of \$50 per month be created for them.

"There have been received in the Pension Office 480,252 claims to September 30, 1899, under the Disability Pension act of June 27, 1890. It will be readily understood that the care of such an enormous number of claims proved in so short a time necessarily taxed the resources of the office to its fullest extent. The work of the mail division ran up to more than 82,000 pieces of mail per day to be opened, classified and properly disposed of. At this writing (October 1) the division is handling 10,000 claims a day. I have arranged the work of the office so that claims under the old law shall be adjudicated as rapidly as they are completed claims under the new law. If upon the assembling of Congress in December it is found that the present force is insufficient for the adjudication of these new claims as rapidly as they are completed, I will not hesitate to ask that you recommend to Congress an increase of the official force of the Pension Bureau so as to secure the prompt settlement of these claims. It is believed there are probably 10,000 claims in this office which can be properly allowed under the provisions of the regulations approved September 25, 1899. The act of June 27, 1890, is the first disability pension law in the history of the world which grants to soldiers and sailors pensions for disabilities which are not proved to have been incurred in the service and in line of duty. This law recognizes a higher obligation of the people to their disabled veterans than was ever formulated into law before. Nothing shall be left undone by this bureau to give effect to this latest expression of the gratitude of the American people to the soldiers who saved the Republic."

THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP.

Incidents Attending the President's Journey to the West—Greeted By Crowds.

PHOENIA, Ill., Oct. 8.—Yesterday was one of ovals for the Chief Magistrate of the Nation. Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana joined in doing him homage, and in the land of Dixie the greeting was no less warm than in the native State of President Harrison.

It was hardly more than daylight when the President's train passed through Newport and Covington, but the President was up and bowed his acknowledgments to the bustling, enthusiastic Kentuckians that crowded the depots as the train passed through.

Cincinnati was reached at 7:30 o'clock and here Hon. John C. New, of Indianapolis, United States Consul-General to London, and Congressman C. H. Grosvenor, of Ohio, joined the party. Despite the early hour, several thousand people gathered at the Central depot to greet the President, among the number being his nephew, Archibald Eaton, of Cincinnati.

The principal event of the day was now to come, and it was all the more interesting to the President that it was not unwitnessed by the usual crowd that gives birth only to the sentiment of exuberance. Near North Bend, O., the old Harrison homestead was reached, and the train came to a stop just abreast the house in which Benjamin Harrison first saw the light and but a few yards from the white shaft that marks the tomb of his illustrious ancestor, President William Henry Harrison. The occasion was not one for words, and as the President passed to the rear of the platform he was unaccompanied by the rest of the party, who delicately left him to the solemn memories that the scenes of his childhood and youth called forth.

HARRISON AT TERRE HAUTE.

TERRE HAUTE, Ind., Oct. 8.—At four o'clock yesterday afternoon President Harrison and party arrived here. While passing through the railroad yards, locomotive whistles and factory bells seemed to compete with each other in making the most noise as a salute. The crush was so great that a platoon of police had great difficulty in keeping a passage way clear to the stand. After the welcoming address by the mayor, the President was loudly cheered and made a short speech.

HE REACHES BLOOMINGTON.

CHAMPAIGN, Ill., Oct. 8.—A large crowd, including the students of the University of Illinois, received the President here with their college cheers. The President spoke briefly. After leaving Champaign the train made no further stops until Bloomington was reached, at 9:16 o'clock.

POPULATION RETURNS.

Another Batch of Interesting Figures From the Census Office.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 8.—The Census Office announces the following population statistics with increases since 1880:

Ohio—Of the State 3,760,719, increase 408,657. Cities and towns: Dayton 58,808, increase 20,190; Greenville 5,539, increase 2,004; Kenton 5,648, increase 1,708; Piqua 9,060, increase 3,033; Springfield 32,133, increase 11,405; Urbana 4,499, increase 247; Xenia 8,145, increase 1,119.

West Virginia—Of the State 760,448, increase 141,991. Cities and towns: Charleston 6,734, increase 2,542; Huntington 10,082, increase 6,908.

Iowa—Of the State 1,900,729, increase 283,114. Cities and towns: Burlington 23,528, increase 8,078; Clinton 18,629, increase 4,577; Davenport 25,161, increase 3,330; Fort Madison 7,906, increase 3,227; Iowa City 5,028, decrease 1,495; Keokuk 14,075, increase 1,958; Lyons 5,791, increase 1,090; Muscatine 11,432, increase 3,137; Ottumwa 13,906, increase 4,992.

Minnesota—Cities and towns: Duluth 32,725, increase 30,080; St. Paul 133,156, increase 91,683; Stillwater 11,239, increase 2,184.

ROBBED THE MAIL.

Registered Packages Taken From a Mail Wagon By Unknown Thieves.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Oct. 8.—The mail wagon which left the post-office at 2:30 a. m. in charge of Driver John Davis and Mail Agent S. A. Parsons, en route to the Louisville & Nashville depot, was robbed of two mail pouches containing valuable registered packages, and soon after daylight one of the sacks was found on a coal float on the river. Every letter or package containing money or valuables had been cut open and the empty envelopes replaced in the sack. There were letters to Germany, France, Ireland and to all points east in the United States. The second pouch containing other matter has not yet been recovered. It is believed that it was taken further up the river. The postmaster does not think the aggregate amount of the registered packages will exceed \$10,000.

Rube Burrows Captured.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Oct. 8.—Telegrams received here to-day announce the capture of Rube Burrows, the notorious train robber, near Myrtle, Monroe County.

Burrows was captured about four o'clock yesterday afternoon by a farmer, John McDuffee, who succeeded in leading him into a trap, and he was secured without a struggle and is now in jail at Linden.

The rewards offered by the Government, States, railroad and express companies for the capture of Burrows aggregate \$7,500. The Southern Express Company has spent no less than \$25,000 trying to capture Burrows.